

TORNADO AT LITTLE ROCK, ARKANSAS, MAY 14, 1923.

By H. S. COLE, Meteorologist.

Weather Bureau Office, Little Rock, Ark., May 20, 1923.]

A tornado occurred in Pulaski Heights, the western section of Little Rock, between 7:30 p.m. and 8 p.m., May 14. The first trees were uprooted just west of the convent, indicating that the storm originated in that vicinity. It moved northeastward and increased rapidly in intensity as it moved forward. The path of the tornado was about 900 feet wide for the first quarter of a mile, after which it increased in width to about 2,800 feet for the next half mile, then narrowed down to about 1,400 feet and continued about that width to the northern limits of the Country Club grounds where it dissipated. The entire distance traveled was nearly 2 miles.

There were two paths in which all trees were down, indicating that there were two centers moving nearly parallel in the widest portion of the path, the two coming together just beyond the Country Club station or following closely, one after the other. Persons located between the two paths report a severe wind, then a lull for a minute or two and a second storm. The storm moved very slowly, some estimating that it took 15 minutes to pass, but there were no lights and the time was probably overestimated.

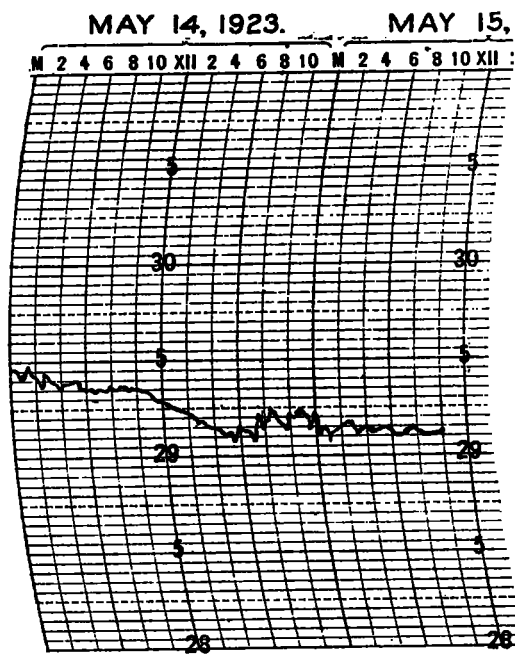


FIG. 1.—Barometric pressure at Little Rock, Ark., May 14, 1923.

The number of trees blown down was unusually large, as there was some heavy pine timber in the path of the storm. Nearly all of the trees were blown to the northeast, and most of them were uprooted instead of broken off. In the two paths of greatest destruction nearly all trees were down; elsewhere a portion of them standing. Three buildings were practically destroyed, one of them a school house, a few were badly damaged, and many slightly damaged. The property damage, aside from the trees that were blown down, was estimated by the Arkansas Democrat at \$40,000. Telephone service was cut off, lighting lines were out of commission, and it was 24 hours before car service could be restored. Several instances of houses being nearly destroyed but leaving the persons within uninjured were reported. It is evident that there were no such extremely high wind

velocities as are usually reported in such storms, the winds being only high enough to do the damage mentioned.

The tornado occurred about 300 miles east of the center of a crescent-shaped Low, extending from Springfield, Mo., to Fort Worth, Tex., the lowest readings reported to this office being 29.38 inches. An unusually heavy thunderstorm was in progress in Little Rock and vicinity at the time, lasting from 7 p. m. until a little after midnight. Rainfall continued at an excessive rate for two hours and five minutes, 3.21 inches occurring from 7:26 p. m. to 9:31 p. m. Heavy rainfall occurred in all portions of the State during the afternoon and night, the heaviest reported being 9 inches at Hot Springs National Park. Although the electric lights were cut off at the home of the writer little inconvenience was experienced in going about the house as the flashes of lightning were almost continuous. It was not possible to see that a tornado was occurring less than 3 miles distant, but it was plainly evident that the most intense portion of the storm was in the locality in which the tornado occurred.

SMALL TORNADO AT THRALL, TEXAS, MAY 14, 1923.

By W. D. FULLER, Meteorologist.

[Weather Bureau Office, Taylor, Tex., May 16, 1923.]

On Monday night, May 14, 1923, a small tornado occurred at Thrall, Tex., a town about 7 miles east of Taylor. On account of the darkness no pendent cloud was observed, but the effects of the disturbance showed plainly that it was tornadic in character.

The storm traveled from southwest to northeast over the short course that could be traced, but owing to the fact that the immediate section where it occurred is sparsely settled, and that crops are not far enough advanced to show the track very distinctly, extensive observations were not possible.

A house about 14 by 30 was picked up, lifted over a fence without touching the latter, and deposited about 50 feet to the northeast. In its original position the house faced south, but when deposited it faced north. It was wrecked when it fell to the ground. A barn of larger dimension was wrecked after being moved about 10 feet. The debris in each case showed clearly a rotary motion of the storm counterclockwise. A few trees were twisted off at the roots. As far as can be learned, the tornado touched only at this point in its course.

Thunderstorm conditions prevailed at Taylor during this disturbance, but nothing unusual was observed here. The barograph trace showed about a tenth of an inch rise during the three hours from 5 p. m. to 8 p. m., was steady for about two hours, then showed a quick rise of nearly a tenth of an inch in about 20 minutes at the time of the tornado 7 miles away, which was between 9:30 p. m. and 10 p. m. The monetary damage was not large, probably not exceeding \$600.

TORRENTIAL RAINS IN EXTREME SOUTHEASTERN TEXAS.

ERNEST CARSON, Observer.

[Weather Bureau Office, Port Arthur, Tex., June 15, 1923.]

On Friday, May 18, 1923, during a severe thunderstorm, torrential rains fell over the extreme southeastern portion of Texas, Beaumont and Port Arthur reporting the greatest amounts, 13.54 inches and 5.38 inches, respectively.